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SUBJECT: Second OAS Public Security Ministerial Spotlights Crime
Prevention, Regional Public Security Training

¶1. (U) This cable is sent from the U.S. Mission to the Organization of American States.

¶2. (SBU) Summary. Public Security Ministers, Justice Ministers, and Attorneys Generals met in Santo Domingo Nov. 4-5, 2009 for the OAS Second Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Public Security in the Americas (MISPA II). Deputy Attorney General (DAG) David Ogden led the U.S. delegation, which included representatives from State, DHS and USAID. During the ministerial, DAG Ogden held bilateral meetings with Dominican Attorney General Radhames Jimenez Pena and Mexican Public Security Vice Minister Monte Alejandro Rubido.

Plenary discussions focused on sharing best practices to prevent crime and strengthen community policing. During final negotiations on the MISPA II communiqu, Ministers overcame attempts by Brazil, Venezuela, and Argentina to weaken a assessment of public security training in the hemisphere, approving the Consensus of Santo Domingo, which includes language to request the OAS Secretariat to complete a study analyzing the best means to strengthen the training and education of personnel responsible for public security in the region. End Summary.

Dominican Minister Stirs the Pot on Deportees

¶3. (SBU) During a lengthy morning presentation, Dominican Minister of the Interior and Police Franklin Almeyda gave a one-sided depiction of public insecurity challenges in the hemisphere, implying that North Americans lived in an American Dream of a life, while Latin Americans could only aspire for this lifestyle. Almeyda asserted that criminals deported from the United States and returned to their country of origin aggravated already bleak public security situations in Caribbean nations. Guatemala, Trinidad and Tobago, Haiti, Jamaica and St. Kitts and Nevis eagerly jumped on this bandwagon to claim that returned deportees posed a serious risk to public security in each of their nations. Trinidad and Tobago noted, The United States has found a way to solve its problem, now we must find a way to solve ours. The head of delegation for St. Kitts and Nevis, Ambassador Izben Williams, compared the U.S. policy of returning deported convicts to countries of origin to the U.S. bilateral drug certification program of the 1990s, saying, We must find a way to multilateralize our approach to this problem. On the second day of the ministerial, the U.S. head of delegation took the floor to respond to the concerns raised on deportees in order to balance the discussion and note ongoing cooperative efforts on deportees. These comments somewhat muted the discussion, and Jamaica

took the floor again, in an apparent show of support, to mention the importance of bilateral cooperation with the United States on this issue. In doing so, Jamaica suggested that the proper term for returning nationals was returnees, rather than deportees.

DAG Ogden Holds Bilaterals with Dominican Counterpart, Mexican Delegation

¶4. (SBU) During his visit to the Santo Domingo on November 4, DAG Ogden held two bilateral meetings on the margins of MISPA II. In

his meeting with Dominican Attorney General Radhames Jimenez Pea, Ogden emphasized U.S. gratitude for the cooperation the GDR had provided for extraditions, the fight against drug trafficking, and money laundering.

Ogden pointed to the current extradition of Jeffry Alejandro Pea Bencosme, wanted for the murder of a police officer in Santiago, from the U.S. to the DR as an example of fruitful two-way cooperation.

¶5. (SBU) Jimenez Pea said he was open to further forms of cooperation with the U.S., including finding ways to improve drug asset forfeiture programs as well as improving dialogue between prosecutors in the U.S.

with Dominican prosecutors. Jimenez Pea also said he would look forward to improving efforts to keep those convicted of drug offenses in the U.S. from serving time, then coming to the DR to live in luxury off of earlier drug profits. DAG Ogden agreed that the two countries should continue to work together, and said the Justice Departments International Affairs Division could work with its DR counterparts to

study the options for improving cooperation. Jimenez Pea said he would alert his deputy, Gisela Cueto, about the discussion and emphasized the need for better ways to combat money laundering.

¶6. (SBU) In a meeting with Mexican Public Security Vice Minister Monte Alejandro Rubido Garcia, DAG Ogden discussed his productive meetings earlier in the week with the Mexican Attorney General. Ogden said he valued the excellent relations the Department of Justice had with the SSP and recognized the tremendous sacrifices

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made by SSP agents in the

line of duty. Rubido Garcia said some 13,000 people had died in drug-related violence in Mexico since Calderon took office but that the public security forces had made great strides in reducing the number of civilian victims. Rubido Garcia said 90 percent of the victims were involved in inter-cartel violence and ten percent died in confrontations between police forces and criminal groups.

Rubido Garcia said that instead of being simply a transit point for cocaine, a recent survey indicated that Mexican consumption of cocaine, while still low, had recently doubled. Rubido Garcia mentioned a manual of standard operating procedure that had been sent by the Secretary of Public Security to the U.S. FBI and DEA and wondered if U.S. authorities had any feedback; DAS Ogden promised to look into the matter. Ogden and Rubido Garcia agreed on the value of police training programs, including those that brought SSP agents to Quantico for training; Rubido Garcia said he had emphasized police training in his OAS plenary statement to underscore its importance. DAS Ogden said he was personally engaged in efforts to fight illicit cross border gun traffic.

Delegations Focus on Crime Prevention, Community Policing

¶7. (U) After listening to a presentation by the OAS Secretariat for Integral Development (SEDI) on the power of art and culture in building a culture of non-violence, delegations voiced their support for crime prevention and community policing programs.

Brazil encouraged the OAS Committee for Hemispheric Security to pursue greater links with SEDI on the subject of crime prevention. Trinidad and Tobago spoke about its school safety officers program which had reduced crime in some neighborhoods. Ecuador mentioned that its community policing program had helped police build relationships with local populations. Guatemala spoke about the challenges of reintegrating former gang members into gainful employment and local neighborhoods.

¶8. (U) USAID Jamaica Mission Director Karen Hilliard gave a highly effective presentation on USAID strategies to engage the community to prevent crime and insecurity, noting that increasingly USAID prevention programs are youth-focused. Hilliard described how the USAID Youth Challenge Program operates in Central America and the Caribbean and is designed to provide opportunities for youth to receive basic education, life skills training, micro-enterprise training, and job opportunities.

Delegations approached the USG delegation following the intervention to find out more information about the USAID program.

OAS Feasibility Study on Strengthening Regional Public Security

Training Generates Diverse Reactions

¶9. (SBU) OAS Department of Public Security Director Christopher Hernandez-Roy presented the latest version of a feasibility study on the best way to strengthen regional public security training for public security personnel, which generated a variety of responses from the delegations. The OAS study follows from a mandate of the Commitment to Public Security in the Americas adopted at MISPA I in Mexico City in October 2008 and provides a survey of police training courses in the region, as well as recommendations of course modules for future mid-level to senior level police training. Many nations supported the proposal. Mexico voiced strong support for OAS support of police training programs, noting that the GOM is embarking on serious efforts to professionalize the police and change the public perception of police to that of a dignified career. The United States and Canada lent their support to the study and offered to provide technical expertise to the OAS as the study moved forward. Grenada and Ecuador gave strong statements in support of the study, with Ecuador congratulating the OAS for its work on the study and urging its completion. A subset of ALBA member states Brazil, Venezuela, and Argentina was more subdued in their comments, saying the study required further deliberation.

Ministers Overcome Brazilian Attempts to Thwart Training Proposal

¶10. (SBU) On the last day of the ministerial, heads of delegation met for a luncheon and private dialogue, where they considered the final MISPA II Communiqu, named the Consensus of Santo Domingo.

Although Brazil led the effort supported to a lesser extent by Argentina and Venezuela to maintain control over the feasibility study by subjecting it to the OAS Committee of Hemispheric Security, the majority of ministers and heads of delegation supported stronger language asking the OAS General Secretariat to complete the study with input for member states and to submit it to MISPA III, to be held in Trinidad and Tobago in 2011. (Comment: Although the OAS currently has high levels of support among member states to address crime and insecurity in the hemisphere, it remains to be seen if the OAS can sustain momentum on the MISPA ministerials. Many vice-ministers attended in lieu of ministers at this years meeting. More thinking needs to be done on how best the OAS can contribute concretely to member states public security concerns. End comment.)

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